



# Press Release

Lake County Sheriff's Office  
[www.sheriffdunlap.org](http://www.sheriffdunlap.org)

***Daniel A. Dunlap***  
Sheriff

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## *Press Release* *December 9, 2010*

Severe Weather Condition Advisories by the Lake County Sheriff's Office

A statewide policy was set in place which was supposed to be an effort to assist motorists confronted with severe weather conditions in Ohio. The fact is, Northeast Ohio's weather is more extreme and lasts for longer periods of time than the rest of the state. This policy was an effort to supply information over broad areas.

The three levels involved are:

- **Level I** – a motorist advisory, not an emergency;
- **Level II** – a warning, not an emergency;
- **Level III** – this is a Snow Emergency.

I have long felt that Level III might only be used when roadways are clogged or nearly impassable, making public safety an issue.

The weather in our region is extreme and fast changing which makes it difficult to predict from one hour to the next what may or may not happen weather wise. We also have long periods of continuously changing snow conditions.

I also consider that mass media, especially TV and radio crews, give up-to-date information about road conditions almost continuously. It's hard to beat a helicopter for up-to-the-minute reporting. Our present system of upgrading and downgrading advisories, warnings, and emergencies appears to cause more confusion and concern about being arrested than easing motorists' concerns. It also causes extra burdens for dispatchers when they are already taxed due to problems associated with foul weather.

Decisions to go out for medicine, go to work or not go to work, pick up a child from day care, are all personal decisions requiring judgment that comes partly from experience.

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I have found that this cumbersome process turns the Sheriff into sort of a school principal where the kids all want to know if they have to go to school in the morning. As the Sheriff, I have avoided the Level III emergency status because I know the hardship it could place on businesses, large and small, if workers felt there was a threat of being issued a citation or arrested if they were on the roadways during a Level III Snow Emergency just to get to work.

After considering all of this, we have determined that we will be issuing road advisories when requested and provide road condition information when necessary, as we have done for years. We may, at some point, have a Level III Snow Emergency limiting use of the roadways. That will be done only after careful consideration. By carefully limiting those types of broadcasts, they will have substantially more meaning, if and when they might occur. Northeast Ohio has always had occasionally, harsh weather. We have become accustomed to it and have many provisions such as our snow removal crews that make it possible to travel during conditions which would cripple other parts of the state, if they were to occur.

Therefore, the Lake County Sheriff's Office will not be issuing multiple road advisories, warnings and emergencies on a regular basis. We will be relying on the meteorologists and the good common sense of our motorists.

Lastly, we want to thank all media who have worked with us in every way possible to get the messages out and explain what they mean to the public.

Daniel A. Dunlap  
*Sheriff of Lake County*